

Body and facial acceptance profile in female biomedicine students at Universidade Paranaense (UNIPAR) – Cascavel

Perfil de aceitação corporal e facial em estudantes mulheres de biomedicina da Universidade Paranaense (UNIPAR) – Cascavel

Perfil de aceptación corporal y facial en estudiantes mujeres de biomedicina de la Universidad Paranaense (UNIPAR) – Cascavel

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Abstract

To evaluate female biomedical students' body and facial acceptance profile at the Universidade Paranaense Campus Cascavel. After authorization from the Ethics Committee, 129 participants of the biomedicine course were interviewed through an online questionnaire that explored the profile of the body and facial acceptance and possible aesthetic interventions among the students. The results showed that 93.5% of the participants were between 18 and 28 years old; 34.1% of the sample pointed out that it depends on the day to be satisfied with their bodies and faces; 26.4% identified with mannequin four on the Stundark silhouette scale; On the other hand, when asked about body perception through the eyes of another person, 20.9% signaled mannequin two and 20.9% mannequin three; 47.3% of the participants reported that sometimes the evaluation of people close to them can influence self-esteem; 96.1% agreed that after performing aesthetic procedures they can change the way they act and think; 31% of the sample showed interest in performing aesthetic procedures such as plastic surgery; A large part of the sample showed interest in interventions that promise and provide quick results; 55.8% already idealize aesthetic standards displayed by the media and 53.5% seek indication of professionals to perform such procedures. The study concludes that, despite the great interest in aesthetic procedures shown by the students, there are still gaps to be addressed. The commercialization of the perfect appearance is indeed the biggest responsible for body dissatisfaction, but finding the balance between aesthetics and health is vital to achieve body and facial acceptance safely.

Keywords: Body image; Cosmetic techniques; Esthetics; Body dissatisfaction.

Resumo

Avaliar o perfil de aceitação corporal e facial em estudantes mulheres de biomedicina da Universidade Paranaense Campus Cascavel. Após a autorização do Comitê de Ética, foram entrevistadas 129 participantes do curso biomedicina por meio de um questionário online que explorou o perfil de aceitação corporal e facial e possíveis intervenções estéticas entre as acadêmicas. Os resultados mostraram que 93,5% das participantes tinham entre 18 e 28

anos; 34,1% da amostra apontaram que depende do dia para estarem satisfeitas com seus corpos e rostos; 26,4% se identificaram com o manequim quatro da escala de silhuetas de Stundark. Em contrapartida quando questionadas sobre a percepção corporal pelo olhar de outra pessoa, 20,9% sinalizaram o manequim dois e 20,9% o manequim três; 47,3% das participantes relataram que as vezes a avaliação de pessoas próximas podem influenciar na autoestima; 96,1% concordaram que após realizar procedimentos estéticos podem mudar o modo de agir e pensar; 31% da amostra demonstraram interesse em realizar procedimentos estéticos como cirurgia plástica. Grande parte da amostra demonstrou interesse em intervenções que prometem e proporcionam resultados rápidos; 55,8% já idealizam padrões estéticos exibidos pela mídia e 53,5% procura indicação de profissionais para realização de tais procedimentos. O estudo conclui que, apesar do grande interesse por procedimentos estéticos demonstrados pelas estudantes, ainda há lacunas a serem abordadas. A comercialização da aparência perfeita é de fato a maior responsável pela insatisfação corporal, mas encontrar o equilíbrio entre a estética e a saúde é vital para alcançar a aceitação corporal e facial de forma segura.

Palavras-chave: Imagem corporal; Técnicas cosméticas; Estética; Insatisfação corporal.

Resumen

Evaluar el perfil de aceptación corporal y facial en estudiantes mujeres de biomedicina de la Universidad Paranaense, Campus Cascavel. Tras la autorización del Comité de Ética, se entrevistó a 129 participantes del curso de biomedicina mediante un cuestionario en línea que exploró el perfil de aceptación corporal y facial, así como posibles intervenciones estéticas entre las estudiantes. Los resultados mostraron que el 93,5% de las participantes tenían entre 18 y 28 años; el 34,1% de la muestra señaló que su satisfacción con sus cuerpos y rostros depende del día; el 26,4% se identificó con la silueta número cuatro de la escala de Stunkard. Por otro lado, al ser cuestionadas sobre la percepción corporal desde la mirada de otra persona, el 20,9% señaló la silueta número dos y el 20,9% la número tres. El 47,3% de las participantes informaron que, a veces, la opinión de personas cercanas puede influir en su autoestima. El 96,1% estuvo de acuerdo en que, después de someterse a procedimientos estéticos, pueden cambiar su forma de actuar y pensar. El 31% de la muestra manifestó interés en realizar procedimientos estéticos como la cirugía plástica. Gran parte de la muestra demostró interés en intervenciones que prometen y proporcionan resultados rápidos. El 55,8% ya idealiza los estándares estéticos exhibidos por los medios de comunicación y el 53,5% busca la recomendación de profesionales para realizar dichos procedimientos. El estudio concluye que, a pesar del gran interés por los procedimientos estéticos demostrado por las estudiantes, aún existen lagunas por abordar. La comercialización de la apariencia perfecta es, de hecho, la principal responsable de la insatisfacción corporal, pero encontrar el equilibrio entre la estética y la salud es vital para lograr una aceptación corporal y facial segura.

Palabras clave: Imagen corporal; Técnicas cosméticas; Estética; Insatisfacción corporal.

1. Introduction

The search to achieve a body appearance considered within the standards has generated a degree of dissatisfaction with self-image. According to Souza and Alvarenga (2016), as much as there is a great cultural diversity in the country in which we live, there is a pattern of dissatisfaction related to the biotype; whatever the region, the ideal body image placed by society follows the same requirements.

This search for the ideal body, which is presented through social media, makes university students feel uncomfortable about their body, getting into friction with themselves. In a study conducted by Alvarenga et al. (2010), there is an important number of university students who are dissatisfied with their body image and that most would like to have smaller measurements than the current ones.

Another study by Brugiolo et al. (2021), showed that most of the university students participating in the research are interested in performing aesthetic procedures to improve their body image, the study also reported that according to data from the 2018 Census of the Brazilian Society of Plastic Surgery (SBCP), between the years 2014 and 2018, there was a greater demand for non-surgical aesthetic procedures while the performance of cosmetic surgeries has been gradually reducing.

In addition, in a literature review, the authors Pires and Ribeiro (2021), observed that facial aesthetic procedures, such as the use of botulinum toxin and hyaluronic acid, have a positive result about self-esteem, also improving the biopsychosocial aspects of the human being.

Therefore, with the increase in appreciation in the field of beauty, non-invasive aesthetic procedures have been one of those in demand, within the alternatives that current society has shown interest in (Costa et al., 2021).

Thus, based on scientific studies and research data, it is noted that in recent years, there has been an increase in the search for aesthetic procedures to improve self-image, thus raising self-esteem and personal well-being, with a focus on body improvement, having a direct link with personal stimulation (Albuquerque; Silva; Teixeira, 2022).

Thus, in this study, the objective of this study was to evaluate and present the profile of the degree of body dissatisfaction and possible aesthetic interventions in university students of the biomedicine course of the Universidade Paranaense in the city of Cascavel - PR.

2. Methodology

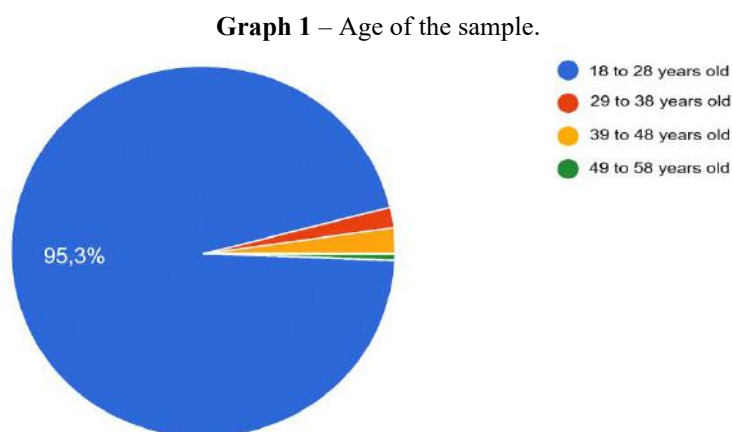
In this study, a prospective quantitative methodology was used, adopting a cross-sectional design to collect data on body/facial satisfaction and aesthetic procedures in a study of qualitative and quantitative nature (Pereira et al., 2009) that used simple descriptive statistics with data classes, absolute frequency and relative percentual frequency (Shitsuka et al., 2014; Akamine & Yamamoto, 2009).

A non-probabilistic convenience sampling was used to reach women in an accessible way in the university community. The women were invited to answer 11 questions via *Google Forms*, through a printed *QR Code*, which was distributed individually to the students of the Biomedicine course at the Universidade Paranaense (UNIPAR) campus Cascavel - PR, which allowed for efficient and convenient data collection. This study was initiated after the approval of the Ethics Committee for Research Involving Human Beings (CEP) of the university - CAAE 87345325.1.0000.0109 of UNIPAR.

The questionnaire contained questions related to body/facial satisfaction and aesthetic procedures, with the objective of evaluating the level of satisfaction with body and facial aesthetics and possible aesthetic interventions of the participants in this research. The data were plotted and evaluated to describe the profile of the students.

3. Results

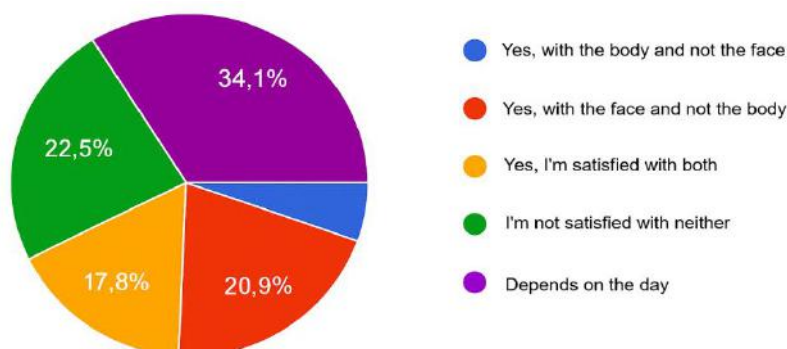
In this research, 129 students from the Biomedicine course, at night, from the Universidade Paranaense – Unipar, who answered the proposed questionnaire, participated in this work. Among the participants, the majority (95.3%) were in the age group of 18 to 28 years (Graph 1).



Source: Authors.

Regarding body and facial satisfaction (Graph 2), 34.1% of the participants reported that satisfaction depends on the day, 22.5% stated that they are not satisfied with both, and 20.9% that they are satisfied with their face, but not with their body.

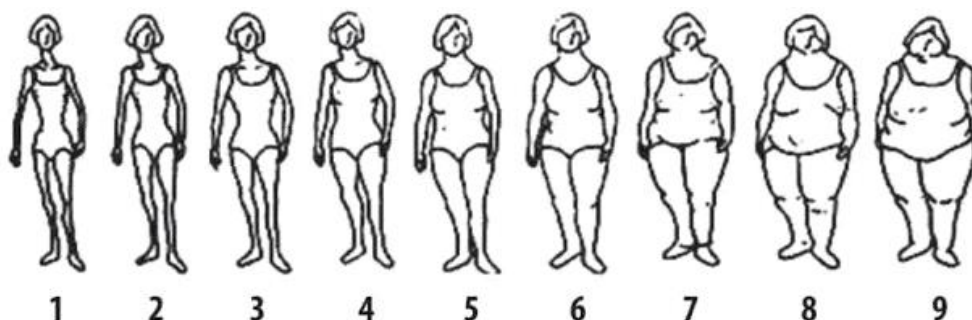
Graph 2 – Evaluation of body and facial satisfaction.



Source: Authors.

Along with the questionnaire, the Stunkard silhouette scale was made available, as shown in Figure 1, with the objective of providing a better visualization of the silhouettes to the interviewees. The participants should observe and score in the questionnaire which model of Figure would fit with their respective bodies currently.

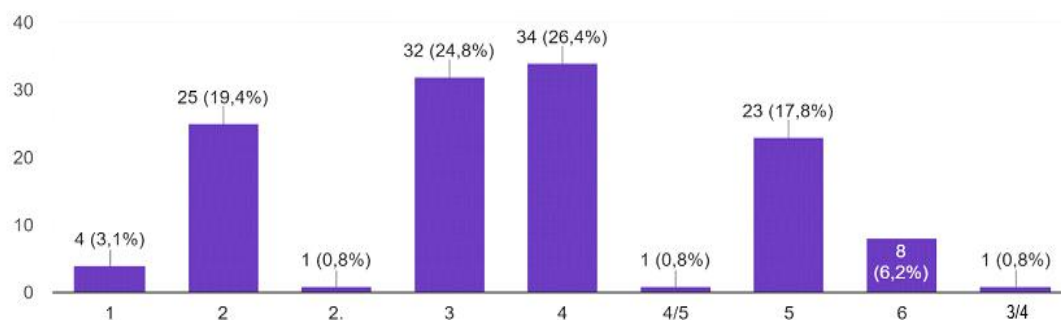
Figure 1 – Stundark silhouette scale presented in the questionnaire.



Source: Pereira and other authors (2009).

Most of the members, 26.4% (Graph 3), stated that they identified themselves with image number 4, while 24.8% saw themselves as mannequin number 3 and 19.4% of the interviewees pointed out that they fit image number 2.

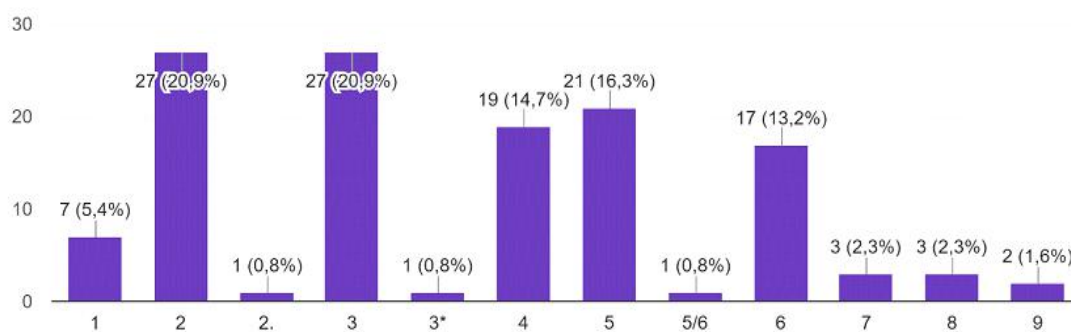
Graph 3 – Body self-perception.



Source: Authors.

Still maintaining the figure of the Stunkard silhouette scale, the survey questioned how the interviewees thought other people saw them. According to Graph 4, 20.9% predicted that they were seen as image 2, also 20.9% stated that they think they are seen as image 3 and 16.3% selected image 5 as the answer.

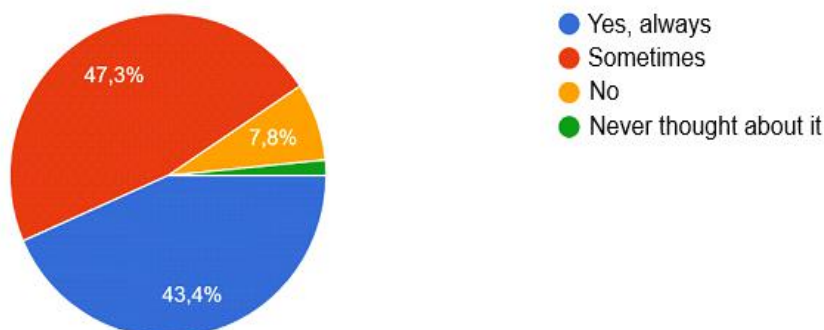
Graph 4 – Body perception of others.



Source: Authors.

When asked whether the evaluation of friends, family and partners in relation to physical appearance influences or has influenced their self-esteem, 43.4% of the students (Graph 5) answered yes, they always felt influenced. On the other hand, 47.3% pointed out that this influence occurs only sometimes, while 7.8% stated that the opinion of these people does not influence and has never influenced their self-esteem

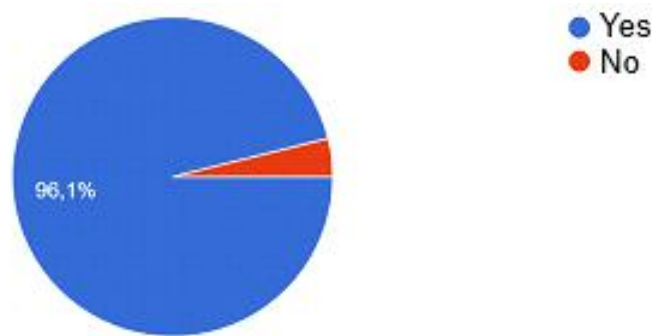
Graph 5 – Influence on self-esteem.



Source: Authors.

Regarding the perception of the interviewees about the possibility of women changing the way they see themselves — including their behavior and way of thinking — after undergoing one or more aesthetic procedures, 96.1% (Graph 6) answered yes, while 3.9% said no.

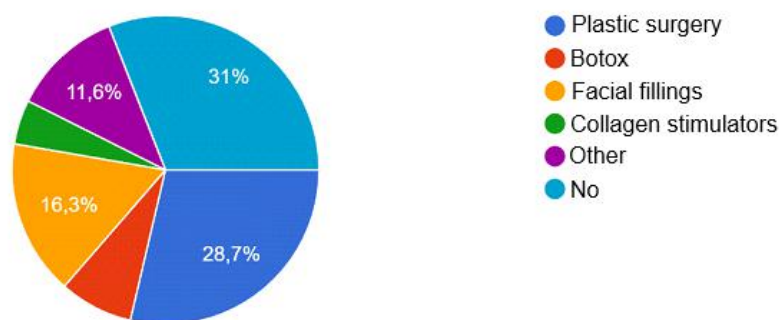
Graph 6 – Change in the way of acting and thinking after performing an aesthetic procedure.



Source: Authors.

However, when asked if they had already performed or would perform any aesthetic procedure with the objective of modifying their appearance, 31% of the participants (Graph 7) answered no. On the other hand, 28.7% stated that they had already undergone or would undergo plastic surgery, and 16.3% agreed that they had already undergone or would undergo facial fillers.

Graph 7 – Interest or not in performing aesthetic procedures.

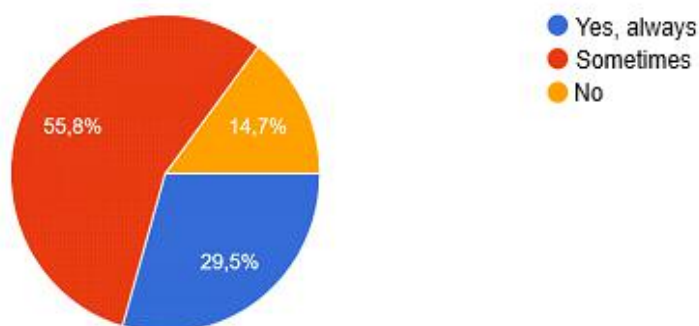


Source: Authors.

Regarding the influence of advertisements run by digital influencers or friends regarding the use of substances for aesthetic purposes, the interviewees reported interest in procedures such as double chin liposuction, use of weight loss medications, collagen supplementation, facial harmonization, buttock fillers and, especially, in interventions that promise quick results

Regarding the aesthetic standards displayed by social media, 55.8% (Graph 8) of the students reported that they "sometimes" idealize or have already idealized these standards for themselves, 29.9% stated that they do, while 14.7% emphasize that they are not linked to these standards.

Graph 8 – Aesthetic standards displayed by social media.



Source: Authors.

Despite the great interest in aesthetic procedures, it was asked if the interviewees seek to confirm whether the professional responsible for performing the procedure — whether facial or body — is properly trained and qualified in the area. According to Graph 9, 53.5% of the participants stated that they are looking for a referral from someone they know; 31.4% reported that, in addition to confirming the training, they also verify the professional's qualification through the website of the respective council; and 8.5% reported trusting only the diploma displayed on site.

Graph 9 – Confirmation of the professional's qualification.



Source: Authors.

4. Discussion

Entering the academic environment can cause changes in the individual's lifestyle, directly influencing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their own body image. This is due to the adaptation to a new social group and the greater susceptibility to external pressures to achieve socially established aesthetic standards, which vary according to the future profession (Alves et al., 2017; Cardoso et al., 2020). A Brazilian study conducted by Alvarenga et al. (2010), conducted with 2,402 female university students in health courses, indicated that 64.4% of the sample wanted to be smaller than it is, which revealed a large magnitude of body dissatisfaction in the group evaluated. In addition, Damasceno et al. (2006) highlight that women face a more intense cultural pressure to conform to the beauty standards promoted by the media. When they fail to meet these standards established by society, they tend to be more dissatisfied with their body image (Rech et al., 2010).

In this research, it was observed that for most of the interviewees (34.1%), body and facial satisfaction depends on the day, another part (22.5%) are not satisfied with their body and facial image and 20.9% are satisfied with their face, but not with their body, this result corroborates the research carried out by Silva Almeida et al. (2015), carried out with 60 students from the Tiradentes University Center, 30 of whom were female, who observed that 55% of the surveyed public has body dissatisfaction, even though there is no great difference, and the authors report having proven the hypothesis that females show

a higher rate of dissatisfaction with their body image. Furthermore, a study carried out by Amaral et al. (2007), with 154 students, 88 of whom were girls, divided by age into three groups: Group 1, from 10 to 12 years old; Group 2, from 13 to 15 years old; and Group 3, aged 16 to 18 years, points out that body weight had the lowest indices related to body satisfaction in all groups. Similarly, Lima et al. (2020) identified high rates of dissatisfaction among women in relation to excess weight, evidencing the desire to reduce their body measurements.

Comparing the question related to the Stunkard silhouette scale, in which the participants should observe and point out which model of the figure would fit with their respective bodies today, with the question that concerns the way the participants think other people saw them, a change in perception is perceived, in how the interviewees consider themselves and how they think they are seen by other people. If we compare figure number 4, of the Stunkard silhouette scale presented in the questionnaire, which was the most selected in terms of how the interviewee considers herself, with figures number 2 and 3, which were the most marked in terms of other people's perception, we observe that, even though the dissatisfaction index is higher than the satisfaction index. Even so, the interviewees demonstrate that the perception of others has been of a biotype of lower body mass compared to their own vision.

In addition, with this study, it was also noticed that the evaluation of friends, family, partner related to physical appearance influence or have already influenced the self-esteem of 43.4% of the students, and 47.3% pointed out that sometimes and this reinforces research carried out by Damasceno et al. (2006), who observed that some sociocultural factors, such as the media, family members and close people, have significantly influenced the body image of individuals. In this same study, the authors also describe that physical structure and body weight gain in adolescents and women are the parameters with the greatest interference of the factors mentioned, as they expose a low weight biotype.

In a study carried out by Paiva Melo and Vieira (2020), 63 students, between men and women, from a private university center in Recife-Pernambuco, were evaluated, the authors were able to conclude that the interviewees do not feel comfortable with their bodies and have personal conflict, caused by the search for the body biotype prescribed by the media and society.

Regarding the perception of the interviewees about the interference of aesthetic procedures in their self-image – including impacts on the way they act and think – 96.1% stated that yes, there is a significant influence. This result corroborates the findings of Santos et al. (2024), whose literature search highlights that patients report a more positive view of their appearance after the procedures, which can favor participation in social events and strengthen interpersonal bonds. The data are also in line with the notes of Salomão, Silva and Santos (2025), which show how the desire for recognition and admiration is related to vanity and the changes promoted by aesthetics, contributing to individuals feeling better about themselves. Thus, taking care of one's appearance also becomes a way of taking care of one's health, with direct impacts on self-esteem and quality of life.

When asked about performing or intending to perform aesthetic procedures to modify appearance, 45% of the interviewees stated that they have already performed or would perform plastic surgery or facial fillers. This data reinforces the results of the study by Silviéri et al. (2021), which analyzed a sample of 100 women, of which 62% had already undergone some type of aesthetic procedure. The study concluded that women have increasingly sought methods that contribute to increasing self-esteem and well-being. In this context, there is a growing demand for both invasive and non-invasive clinical procedures.

Regarding the temptation of advertisements from digital influencers or friends in relation to the use of some substance to improve something aesthetic, the study showed that the interviewees pointed out interest in weight loss drugs, collagen, facial harmonization, gluteal fillers and especially procedures that show quick results, which is in line with Viana (2012), who

described that the yearning for "eternal youth", Every day more people seek "miraculous" aesthetic forms and methods, which make physiological aging be delayed or annihilated from their lives.

In addition, this research showed that more than half of the students reported that they "sometimes" idealize or have already idealized the aesthetic standards displayed by social media to themselves, which corroborates the study by Russo (2005), who reported that the media and other means of communication have constantly reinforced the image of an ideal body standard, Resulting in an interest and a search with a feeling of obligation to achieve them, when the physical structure does not fit the requirements, the individual reaches a degree of dissatisfaction.

In addition, as observed in the survey, most women who undergo aesthetic procedures tend to seek indications from qualified professionals through indications from acquaintances, there are still, but in a smaller quantity, those who search on advice sites, and a small number trust the diploma presented by the professional. With this, the relevance of valuing aesthetic professionals, as well as the services they offer, is highlighted. Aesthetics is not limited to transforming people's appearance, but also influences the way they perceive and feel after undergoing aesthetic procedures (Pereira; Bitencourt, 2018). Professionals in the area, by dedicating themselves to the excellence of their services, also seek to provide greater well-being and comfort to customers. In addition, aesthetics has the purpose of promoting happiness, health, and quality of life. The Humanized Aesthetics approach values the patient, emphasizing the importance of care and attention (Araújo, 2024).

It is worth noting the damage that the search for the perfect ideal of beauty causes in women's lives, when a person is excessively concerned with small details of their appearance and this "defect" exerts effects of suffering and social isolation on them, it can be BDD (Body Dysmorphic Disorder). Affected patients enter an unbridled search for improvements in physical aspects. As there is a disease involved, this patient is never satisfied, and lives in incessant search for more and more procedures (Bavoso, 2020).

Health and beauty may be related, but there is no direct and necessary link between them. It is possible to be healthy and not follow society's aesthetic standards. Just as it is possible to follow society's aesthetic standards and not be healthy. The problem arises when one thing runs over the other. In the name of beauty and aesthetics, some people can put their health at risk, in a clear inversion of values (UPIS, 2019).

Finding the balance between aesthetics and health is precisely in respecting each other's limits. It's okay to want to make a change yourself. More than an aesthetic benefit, it is the fulfillment of a desire that brings self-affirmation and confidence, boosting self-esteem when you look good. The limit arises when the search for a beautiful body can lead to health risks. This is the threshold that needs to be reflected on before performing any procedure or change of habit thinking about beauty (Carneiro et al., 2021).

The search for aesthetic procedures is increasing among young people, based on the dissatisfactions that arise throughout life. They reveal as never before the desire to change one's image to improve self-esteem, achieve satisfaction, even though possible exaggerations or even frustrations with the results achieved may occur (Barros, 2022). While cosmetic procedures can offer visible improvements in appearance, it is crucial to be aware of the risks involved, such as adverse reactions, infections, and dissatisfaction with the results. The need for a cautious and informed approach when considering such interventions, including consultation with qualified professionals and assessing the risks versus benefits for each individual patient (Caetano and Vieira, 2024).

5. Conclusion

The findings of the present study allowed us to conclude that body and facial dissatisfaction among women students of Biomedicine at Unipar is of varying levels, and this perception is often influenced by external factors, such as opinions of third parties and aesthetic standards disseminated in social media. It was observed that most participants recognize the impact

of aesthetic procedures on the way they perceive and behave, associating such interventions with improved self-esteem and well-being. Not accepting one's own aesthetics can lead to the development of Body Dysmorphic Disorder, which contributes to an unbridled search for aesthetic procedures to achieve satisfaction with oneself — a topic that needs to be more discussed and observed, especially because it is young women.

Thus, it is crucial to understand the risks that body and facial dissatisfaction can entail in the context of the university community. It is essential to promote the discussion about the limits between the search for beauty and damage to health, in addition to encouraging educational actions aimed at preventing disorders, strengthening self-esteem and valuing self-knowledge, self-care and acceptance of one's own image.

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